THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI V. RADHIKA SELVI): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) In view of the reply of part (a) these questions do not arise.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Revamping tea industry

855. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that India exported 211 million kg. of tea in 1998, but the figure fell to 200 million kg. in 2006, and India's tea exports declined to 75.7 million kg. in the first half of this year despite the fact that India has around 28 per cent of global tea production;

(b) whether it is also a fact that a considerable number of tea gardens have gone sick due to lack of infrastructure, modernization and efficient management; and

(c) if so, the steps Government propose to take to revamp the tea industry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) The quantity of tea exported from the country during 2006 was 218.73 million kg. as compared to 210.34 million kg. in 1998. However, due to strong appreciation of Rupee in dollar terms and also decline in exports to countries like Iraq, Pakistan etc. the volume of export of tea from India during the first six months of 2007 as compared to the corresponding period of last years has

Year/Period	Quantity (M.Kg)
2007 (Jan-June)*	75.73
2006 (Jan-June)	87.48

'Estimated and subject to revision Source: Tea Board

(b) and (c) As on 1 st April, 2007,33 tea gardens were reported to be closed in the country. The depressed price situation since mid-1999 coupled with other factors like high cost of production, low prices of tea, ownership disputes etc. have affected the viability of tea gardens resulting in the closure of these gardens.

The Government has recently announced a rehabilitation package for the closed tea gardens. Ten of these 33 closed tea gardens have opened so far. Tea Board is already implementing a number of plan schemes for the overall development of the tea sector under which financial/technical assistance is provided to the tea industry. In addition, a Special Purpose Tea Fund has also been set up for financing replantation/rejuvenation activities aimed at improving the age profile of old tea bushes to improve quality and productivity.

WTO in Doha

†856. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi**.**

(a) whether it is a fact that the biggest obstruction in die progress of present development Round of WTO in Doha is the obstinacy of developed countries that they are not ready to reduce the huge subsidy which they are giving to farmers in their countries;

(b) if so, the measures suggested by developed countries to solve this problem; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to ensure livelihood of farmers and employment to workers at a time when India's target is to achieve nine per cent growth in economy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Domestic support issues and market access are key aspects of the agriculture negotiations under the Doha Round of trade negotiations in the World Trade Organisation (WTO). On 17 July 2007, the Chairman of the WTO's Committee on Agriculture-Special Session brought out Draft Modalities on Agriculture, which, *inter alia,* proposes a tiered formula for reduction of Overall Trade-distorting Domestic Support (OTDS). This implies reductions in OTDS by the European Communities and die United States of America by 75-85% and 66-73% respectively. The text further proposes higher cuts by developed countries which have high OTDS of 40% or more of the total value of their agricultural production. Multilateral discussions on the Draft Modalities are being held since September 2007.

(c) The needs and interest of the developing and least-developed, countries are at the heart of the Doha Work Programme. A substantial and effective reduction in domestic support and tariffs in agriculture by developed countries while enabling developing countries to protect and promote the interests of their low income and resource poor farmers is a key priority for India in the negotiations. The flexibilities available to developing countries would be utilized for protecting the sensitive sectors in non-agriculture from the impact of tariff reductions or bindings.

With a view to protecting the livelihood of farmers and increasing agricultural production, the Government has adopted a multi-pronged strategy including initiatives such as launcing of the National Horticulture Mission, micro-irrigation, balanced use of fertilizers, development of marketing infrastructure etc. A comprehensive credit policy was announced on 18 June 2004 for increasing the flow of credit to the agriculture sector. Two new Schemes, that is, the National Food Security Mission to increase production of rice, wheat and pulses and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana have been launched with the objective of incentivising the States to increase public investment in agriculture and allied sectors.

SEZs sanctioned

†857. SHRI SURENDRALATH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) sanctioned in the country, so far;

(b) the total area of land acquired under this scheme, the details thereof, State-wise;

(c) whether it is a fact that only new companies are getting benefit from this scheme but the undertakings already existing in that region are not getting any benefit from this;

(d) the number of persons displaced from this acquisition, the details thereof, State-wise; and

† Origins! notice of the question was received in Hindi.